








ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE, DIFFERENCES YOU CAN MAKE

Shopping is our first line of defence for keeping environmentally hazardous products out of our air, our water and ourselves. Use the following chart to help you make air-friendly purchases. The * symbol indicates what you should be looking for in a product.

PRODUCT CATEGORIES	DESIRABLE PRODUCT QUALITIES	CHECK THE LABEL	QUANTITY			TOXICITY			PACKAGING			ENERGY	PLACE
			LIMIT	BULK	DOUBLE-UP	LOW/NO VOC*	CORROSIVE	PESTICIDE FREE	REUSABLE	RECYCLED	RECYCLABLE		
PERSONAL CARE (eg. shampoo, cosmetics, hair spray)	Non-aerosol Unscented Natural ingredients	 Recycled	*		*	*			*	*	*	EFFICIENCY	LOCAL/ REGIONAL
CLOTHES	Natural fibers Cold washable	 Green Clean Machine Washable				*			*	*	*	Cold water wash	*
BUILDING MATERIALS (eg. wood, insulation, paint, caulking glue)	Water/latex based Formaldehyde free Non-aerosol	 EcoLogo, Recycled	*			*	*		*	*	*		*
FOOD (eg. produce, dairy packaged and prepared)	Water/latex based Formaldehyde free Non-aerosol	Local when possible	*	*			*		*	*	*		*
CLEANING (eg. dish detergents, cleansers, polishes)	Non-aerosol Unscented Biodegradable Non poisonous	 EcoLogo, Recycled	*		*	*	*		*	*	*		
FURNISHINGS (eg. carpets, furniture, drapes)	Formaldehyde-free Non-petroleum	 EcoLogo				*			*	*	*		*
APPLIANCES (eg. range, fridge, dryer, computer stereo)	Energy saving Natural gas Electric powered Durable	 Energy Star			*				*	*	*	*	*
GARDENING (eg. fertilizers, herbicides, garden tools, lawn mower)	Biodegradable Non-poisonous Electric powered Push power	 EcoLogo	*			*	*		*	*	*	*	*

* VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds) is a large group of compounds that evaporate into the air at room temperature. They include a variety of chemicals such as:

- Formaldehyde — carpets, furniture, and particle board
- Benzene — paints, varnishes, stains, adhesives and sealants

• Perchloroethylene — used in dry-cleaning, or commercial spot cleaners

These chemicals can have harmful effects on your health when inhaled and the environment when released.

Our every day actions — from going shopping to cleaning our homes — directly effect our health and the environment. As consumers, we have an opportunity to use our purchase power to protect our air, our water, and ultimately ourselves.

Re-using Goods

For a copy of Toronto Environmental Alliance's "Use it Re-use it" guide to re-use, repair and rentals call

City of Toronto publications at (416) 397-7100

For more information contact:

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Our air

Ourselves

POWER OF THE
GREEN CONSUMER

This flyer focuses on helping you make purchase decisions that minimize impact on our air, our water, and ourselves.

A green purchase starts with three basic questions:

Will the product do the job?

What is the impact of the product's life cycle?

Is the product affordable?

Our water



Environment
Canada

Environment
Canada



Ontario

Ministry of Environment and Energy



Waterfront
Regeneration
Trust

Using your

PURCHASE POWER is at the heart of being a green consumer. It's the ability to select one company's product or service over another using criteria like toxicity, packaging and/or energy efficiency. By being selective in your purchases, you encourage manufacturers and retailers to provide products that minimize impact on the air and water.

Making your voice heard is another way to exert your power as a consumer. Talk to the store manager. Let her or him know that environmentally friendly alternatives are important to you. When you switch brands or stop buying a product altogether, let the manufacturer know why. Many product labels provide toll-free numbers or internet sites for comment.

MOST PRODUCTS HAVE SIX STAGES IN THEIR LIFE CYCLE, AND EACH STAGE HAS AN IMPACT ON OUR AIR AND WATER:

- Pre-production (raw materials)
- Production
- Packaging
- Shipping and distribution
- Product use
- Product re-use, recycling or disposal

power as a Consumer

Making it count at shelf level

Here are six criteria that you can apply at the shelf to reduce your impact on the air.

QUANTITY

Buy only as much as you need. Everything we purchase uses resources. By reducing our demand, fewer resources will be consumed and less pollution generated. Ask yourself if you need to buy the product at all. Try to double-up on products by using one product for many jobs.

LABELING

Always read the label, it's the best way to protect yourself and the environment. A label should tell you what's in the product, how to use and dispose of it safely, and possible hazards. If you are still concerned about a product after reading the label, call the manufacturer for more details.

TOXICITY

Limit or eliminate products and services that involve the release of toxic chemicals, either through their manufacture, use, or disposal. These chemicals end up in our air and water and ultimately ourselves. The EcoLogo identifies products that are environmentally preferable.

Logos to look for

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE



EcoLogo Identifies products that are less harmful to the environment



Recycle Logo Products or packaging which can be or have been recycled



EnergyGuide Logo Found on the "big six" appliances (dish and clothes washers, dryers, refrigerators, freezers, and ranges). The lower the kWh per month rating the more energy efficient



Solvent Free Garment Cleaning A wet-cleaning process that uses no perchloroethylene or petroleum-based solvents.

HARMFUL



Corrosive Substances that can cause surface deterioration and/or tissue damage



Flammable Burns easily (e.g., gasoline, oils, solvents)



Reactive When incompatible substances are combined they can release toxic fumes, excess heat, fire, etc.



Toxic Harmful to living organisms (e.g., pesticides, cleaning fluids)

PACKAGING

Look for products that have minimal packaging, recycled content, and are recyclable or re-usable. Packaging is more than a disposal issue, it's also a manufacturing issue. The process of manufacturing packaging requires the use of energy and materials. The process can release toxic chemicals into the air and water. Whenever possible buy products without packaging.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Select appliances and lights that are energy saving and efficient. Reducing the amount of energy consumed decreases the amount of air pollution produced. The EnerGuide and EPA Energy Star are good guides for selecting such products.

PLACE PRODUCED

When a product meets the above criteria consider buying locally or regionally. The greater the distance a product must be transported the more air pollution created.